

Workshop Goals

- 71 Become familiar with the Guide as a reference document
- 72 Review basic requirements and options for local evaluation in Even Start
- 73 Develop evaluation questions and plan for local evaluation plan
- 74 Integrate state requirements with federal advice on local evaluation

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- Section I:** Chapter 1: Background
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Glossary

Even Start Statutory Requirements

"SEC 1235 PROGRAM ELEMENTS.

Each program assisted under this subpart shall – provide for an *independent evaluation* of the program, to be used for *program improvement*..”

Background

Local Evaluation (project specific)

- 821 Designed by staff and the local evaluator
- 822 Assesses program effectiveness based on state performance indicators and other participant outcomes
- 823 Provides data on program intensity, participant demographics, attendance and retention rates

Local Evaluation (project specific) cont.

- ≡ Addresses 15 required elements and answers specific questions of interest (focused inquiry)
- ≡ Reports on progress in achieving project objectives and program accomplishments
- ≡ Provides recommendations for improvement

Data ≠ Information

Evaluation ≠ Research

Performance Indicators ≠ Local Report

- ≡ Performance Indicators = Accountability
- ≡ Information = Learning and Application
- ≡ Evaluation = Continuous Improvement

Accountability ≠ Improvement

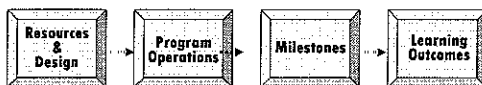
Synthesis of Local and State Even Start Evaluations
Abt Associates 2002

Key Findings

- ≡ Recommendations rarely included in reports
- ≡ Data rarely used to systematically manage and improve programs
- ≡ Directors have little evaluation experience or expertise
- ≡ Directors have difficulty identifying qualified evaluators
- ≡ Resources allocated for local evaluation are limited

Key Assumptions

- ≡ Central role of outcomes
- ≡ Audiences
- ≡ Phase of development
- ≡ Evidence
- ≡ Program theory



Chapter 1, p. 3

Lessons Learned

- ≡ Evaluations require adequate resources and a specific focus.
- ≡ There is no substitute for evaluation expertise
- ≡ Effective evaluators engage with the program.
- ≡ Projects should incorporate and expand beyond their state's performance indicators

Chapter 1, p. 4

The Role of the Evaluator

- ☐ Collaborate with staff to identify outcomes and develop data collection systems
- ☐ Collect data about project objectives, learning outcomes and key questions for improvement
- ☐ Analyze, report, and discuss results
- ☐ Provide recommendations for program improvement based on evidence

Chapter 1, p. 9

The Role of Project Director

- ☐ Include staff in evaluation planning (identify outcomes, key questions, and data collection systems)
- ☐ Monitor timeliness and quality of data collection
- ☐ Discuss results and recommendations for program improvement
- ☐ Use findings to improve program

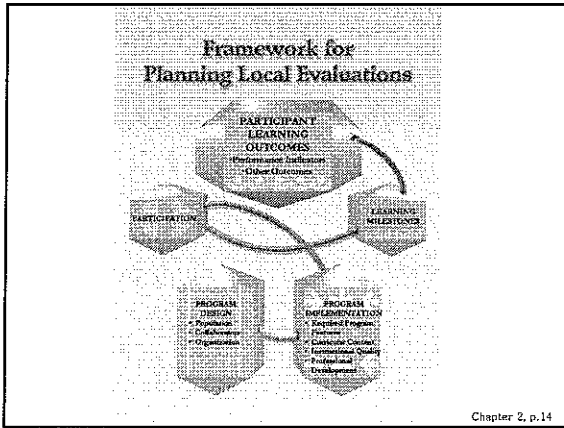
Chapter 1, p. 9

Activity #1

Reflection

Please choose the category that best describes the current state of your Even Start project's evaluation.

Evaluation Indicators	Yes	Not Yet	Needs More Work/Comments
The local evaluation has committed adequate resources (including at least \$10,000) to conduct a comprehensive evaluation.			
The evaluator is in regular contact with project staff, visits the project at least on a quarterly basis, and has observed activities in each of the project's component areas.			
The local evaluation collects data about participant learning outcomes, including state performance indicators and other project identified outcomes.			
The local evaluation collects data to answer evaluation questions (conducts a focused inquiry)			
The project has implemented recommendations from the local evaluation report.			



PARTICIPANT LEARNING OUTCOMES
• Performance
• Indicators
• Other Outcomes

Participant Learning Outcomes

Definition:
Expected learning results for all participants.

Questions:
Are adults achieving higher levels of English language proficiency?
To what extent are Even Start children ready for school?

Chapter 2, p.15

PROGRAM DESIGN
• Population
• Collaborators
• Organization

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
• Required Program Features
• Curricular Content
• Instructional Quality
• Professional Development

Program Design and Implementation

Questions:
Does the basic program model continue to meet the needs of families recruited for the program?
Is the program implemented as intended?
What are participants' perceptions of the value of program services?

Chapter 2, p.16

PARTICIPATION

Participation

Question:
Do families participate intensely enough and long enough to achieve goals?

Chapter 2, p.16

LEARNING MILESTONES

Learning Milestones

Question:
How much progress are participants making toward learning outcomes?

Chapter 2, p.16

Selecting A Focus

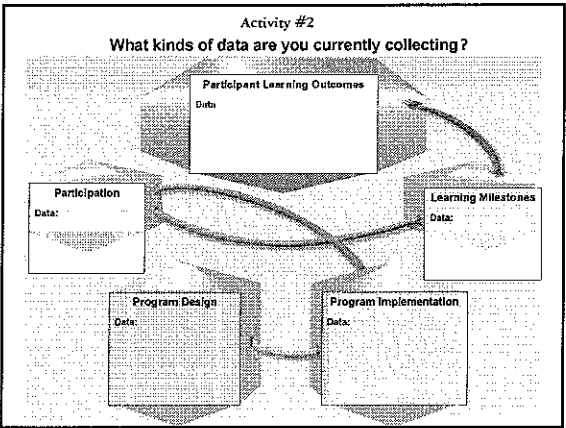
Sample Evaluation Questions

First Year Programs
To what extent are curriculum objectives, instructional materials, and pedagogical approaches research-based?

Second Year Programs
What are the participation patterns of Even Start adults and children?

Mature Programs
How do low and high participants differ in their success with learning outcomes?

- Consideration of all five of the framework's building blocks
- Always address participant learning outcomes
- Consider stage of program development



Chapter 6

Participation Data

Sufficient intensity + Sufficient duration = Sustainable changes
Federal Definition of Family Literacy Services

Regular attendance + Sufficient duration = Achieve family goals
Required Program Element: Attendance and Retention

Chapter 6, p. 55 and 57

Elements for Participation Data

1. Intensity: Number of instructional hours offered
2. Attendance: Number of instructional hours attended
3. Attendance Rate: Percentage based on hours attended/hours possible
4. Duration: Length of time enrolled

Chapter 6, p. 56-59

Intensity Attendance Attendance Rate Duration

1. Do projects offer enough hours of service for participants to achieve outcomes?
2. Are participants staying in programs long enough to achieve their goals?
3. Are participants attending enough hours of service to achieve outcomes?
4. Are participants attending on a consistent basis?
5. Are families meeting the project's attendance policies/expectations?

Calculation and Data Collection Considerations

- Identify activities eligible to be counted
- Reflect actual hours offered/attended, not estimates
- Develop a data collection system (forms and protocol)
- Inform/train project staff and service providers

Chapter 6, p. 60-61

US Department of Education Recommended Minimum Number of Instructional Hours to be Provided Monthly

- 60 hours of adult education
- 65 hours of preschool early childhood education
- 60 hours of infant/toddler early childhood education
- 20 hours of parenting education (includes Interactive Literacy)

Chapter 6, p. 56

Activity #3
Sample Adult Participant Attendance Data Spreadsheet
Hours of Attendance
Partial Data Set n=14

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
Enroll Status	ID #	ESL Attend	ESL Offered	ESL Rate	Par. Ed Attend	Par. Ed Offered	Par. Ed Rate	Int. Act. Ltr. Attend	Int. Act. Ltr. Offered	Int. Act. Ltr. Rate
	50	15	15	100%	3	3	100%	2	2	100%
drop	51	45	90	50%	5	10	50%	8	16	50%
drop	52	104	104	100%						
	48	200	200	100%	13	19	68%	29	34	75%
	39	203	250	81%	15	24	63%	30	40	75%
	39	212	252	84%	15	35	43%	26	34	79%
	45	212	252	84%	8	23	35%	27	42	64%
	5	214	252	85%	18	21	71%	30	34	88%
	40	249.5	340	73%	18	23	70%	29	42	69%
	47	315.5	656	48%	30	59	51%	75	82	92%
	18	509	656	78%	31	60	40%	70	82	85%
	7	523	656	80%	40	58	69%	72	82	88%
	10	563	656	86%	45	59	76%	69	82	84%
	32	569.5	656	87%	33	59	56%	72	82	88%
Count	14				13			13		
Median	213	252.5		85%	15	24	62%	30	42	71%
Minimum	18	18		3	3			2	2	
Maximum	569.5	656		45	59			72	82	

Attendance Data Spreadsheet Questions

- 1 Compare the median class attendance rates for ESI, Parent Education and Interactive Literacy. What do the data suggest about differences in class attendance patterns? What might these differences suggest about participant satisfaction? What actions might a project take based on these data?
- 2 The project's expected attendance policy is set at 70%. What do the data indicate about the attendance rates for participants #45 and #8? What actions might a project take based on these data?
- 3 What do the data suggest about the intensity of the Parenting Education program offerings (PE (59) + IIA (82) = 141 hours)? The Department of Education's recommendation for minimum number of monthly instructional hours offered in Parent Education is 20 hours/month
- 4 What do the data suggest about the attendance patterns for participants #33 and #34? Why were these participants dropped?

Summary: Using Participation Data

- Interpret participant outcomes
- Understand attendance patterns
- Check compliance with project attendance policies
- Identify recruitment/retention problems
- Gather feedback on participant satisfaction
- Monitor posttest assessment schedules

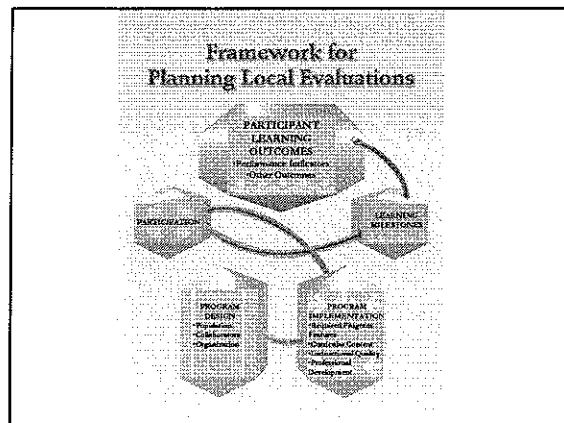
Chapter 6, p. 61-62

Activity #4

Participation Data - Reflections

Please choose the response that best describes your use of participation data

We have analyzed our participation data to know...	Yes	Not yet, but data are readily available	Data are not in useable format/ comments
if families meet the program's attendance policies/expectations.			
in which components we offer enough hours of service for participants to achieve outcomes.			
if participants are staying in the program long enough to achieve their goals.			
if participants attend enough hours of service to achieve outcomes.			
if participants attend on a consistent basis.			



Activity #5

**Project HERO, Michigan:
2004-05 Summary**

What are two priority areas for Project HERO's staff and evaluator to consider investigating in the coming year?

Why do a focused inquiry

- Direction for improving program practices
- Explore reasons for lower or higher than expected results
- Understand larger patterns of achievement
- Analyze subgroup services or outcomes
- Supplement performance indicator outcome data
- Gather longitudinal information

**Planning a Focused Inquiry:
Evaluation Questions**

Evaluation questions are:

- the heart of a focused inquiry, and
- the basis for planning an evaluation.

Evaluation questions communicate to all audiences.

Chapter 10, p. 96

**Roles of Project Director &
Evaluator**

- Identify key issues and topics of interest based on evaluation findings and recommendations for improvement
- Involve all staff/collaborators in brainstorming and prioritizing evaluation questions
- Director – select evaluation questions
- Evaluator – refine question(s) and suggest data collection plan
- Review and finalize plan with staff/collaborators

Sources of Evaluation Questions

- Previous findings of performance indicators and local evaluations
- Project objectives
- Project theory or logic model
- Discussions among project staff
- Discussions with partners, collaborators and other stakeholders
- New program features or approaches
- Questions, puzzles, dilemmas

Focus of Evaluation Questions

- Four Components
- Project Elements, e.g., Recruitment
- Program Design, Operations, Implementation
- Participation
- Progress and Outcomes
- Relate Processes to Outcomes

Activity 6

Sources of Evaluation Questions

Performance Indicator: Adult Education

Places to investigate:

- Difference between number of total adults and adults with 100+ hours
- Difference of "Percent Meeting Expectations" by literacy level(s)
- Difference of "Percent Meeting Expectations" by categories of hours
- Overall mean of hours and range

Developing Useful Evaluation Questions

Qualities of a Useful Evaluation Question

- Question is relevant to project
- Findings can be acted upon to further the goals of the project
- Answer is not already known

Chapter 10, p. 96

Qualities of a Useful Evaluation Question

- Question is answerable with data – either new data and/or re-analysis of existing data
- Question allows more than one answer
- Data collection is feasible given resources

Chapter 10, p. 96

Useful Evaluation Questions for Even Start Programs

Example:

To what extent do early childhood staff consistently implement language production strategies as intended?

Relevant?

Actionable?

Known answer?

Answerable?

Multiple answers?

Feasible?

Chapter 10, p. 95

Types of Questions to Avoid

- Yes/No Answer
Does the program continue in the summer months?
- Management Issue
How can the program be sustained after funding ends?
- Not Specific to Project
What curricula are available for preschool?

Types of Questions to Avoid

- Public Relations Focus
Why do parents like Even Start?
- Personnel Evaluation
Which staff members are most effective?

What's Behind the Question?

Work with the Topic to Craft an Evaluation Question

- Compare: Does the program continue in the summer months?
With: *To what extent do instructional activities and participation vary across the school year?*
- Compare: How can the program be sustained after funding ends?
With: *Which program activities have led to potential for sustainability?*
- Compare: What curricula are available for preschool?
With: *In which areas is the current curriculum strongest and weakest in terms of match to children's learning needs?*

What's Behind the Question?

Work with the Topic to Craft an Evaluation Question

- Compare: Why do parents like Even Start?
With: *What are parents' perceptions of the value of Even Start?*
- Compare: Which staff members are most effective?
With: *Which staff members need additional training?*

Taking the Next Step: Developing Sub-Questions

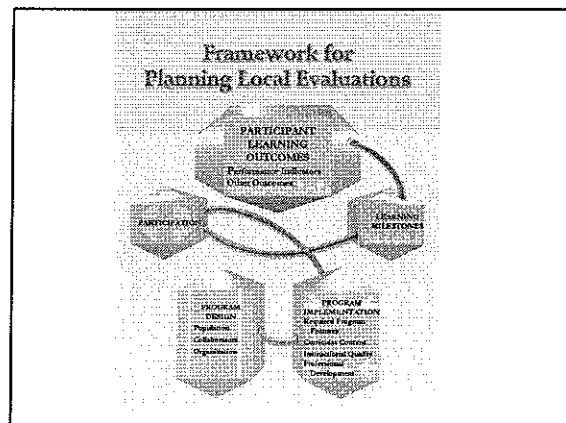
- Evaluation Question: *To what extent do early childhood staff consistently implement oral language production strategies as intended?*
- Sub-Questions:
- Which language strategies is the program focusing on for different age groups?
 - What is the research or theoretical basis for the choice of strategies?
 - What expectations has the program set for staff use of strategies and how have those been communicated?
 - What has been the extent of professional development for early childhood staff in oral language development?
 - What are staff member's understandings of oral language production strategies?
 - What barriers do staff perceive in using the strategies?

Moving from Questions to Data Sources and Methods

- Keep in mind: Value of multiple sources for the same question
Feasibility of data collection
Credibility of methods
Sample
- Example: *To what extent do early childhood staff consistently implement oral language production strategies as intended?*
- Consider:
- Interviews with staff
 - Staff survey
 - Interviews with early childhood supervisor/director
 - Review of lesson plans
 - Observations of classroom instruction
 - Sample

Developing Your Own Questions

- Step #1: Review evaluation report to identify issues/questions
- Step #2: Brainstorm broad focus questions
- Step #3: Select one priority broad focus question
- Step #4: Apply criteria:
 - Relevant?
 - Actionable?
 - Known answer?
 - Answerable?
 - Multiple answers?
 - Feasible?
- Step #5: Develop sub-questions and data sources



Chapter 3: Participant Learning Outcomes

Definition:

Program-identified learning outcomes that apply to all adults and children

Examples:

Increase reading levels increase oral language skills, obtain degree, regularly attend school

Chapter 3, p. 24

Using Comparisons with Outcome Data to Guide Interpretation

To have meaning: Findings are compared to standards or expectations

Types of comparisons:

- ✓ Compare pre- and post-test results for individuals
- ✓ Compare to test standard or mastery level, depending on test
- ✓ Compare program scores from year to year
- ✓ Compare to state indicator data
- ✓ Compare sub-groups, e.g. participation entry level demographic characteristics

Chapter 3, p. 30-32

Example: Comparison of Adult Attainment Levels

	Target Expectation	Your Program	State-Even Start	State Adult Education
Adult Education: TABE Reading	50%	68%	65%	50%

Example: Early Childhood Learning Outcome

Pre-school Outcome: 60% of preschool children will increase at least one percentile rank on the PPVT-III

Finding: 42% made gains (16/38)

Chapter 3, p. 30-32

What else to look at?

Of the 38 children who pre & post tested:

made gains 16
showed losses 18

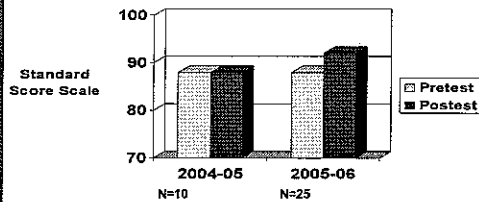
Of the 27 children who started below 40th percentile

increased 15
same 3
decreased 9

Difference By Groups of Participants

PPVT – III Results: Average gain in standard score points was 0 last year and 4 standard score points this year

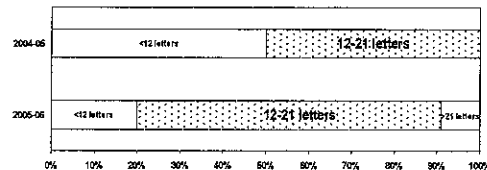
Note: 4 points is a significant learning gain



Difference By Groups of Participants

PALS – Upper Case Letters Results: 80% of children this year identified a number within or above the developmental range

Note: 12-21 letters identified correctly is developmental range for 4 year olds



Chapter 7: Learning Milestones

Definition:

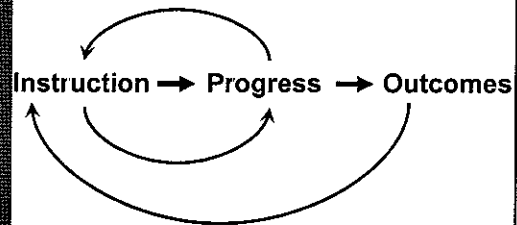
Short-term benchmarks of learning progress linked to the achievement of participant learning outcomes

Examples:

decoding skills, reading fluency, use of comparative words

Chapter 7

Using Learning Milestones Data for Program Improvement



Example: Understanding Progress

School Age Reading Levels

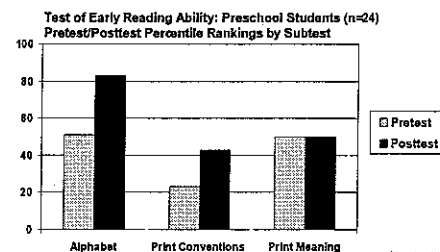
Finding: 10% of Hill Central's Even Start children were successful in reading at or above grade level (state performance indicator expectation: 60%)

Percent Achieving Adequate Progress in:	
overall reading level	10%
decoding skills	70%
sight word recognition	100%
fluency	20%
literal comprehension	10%

Chapter 7, p.71

Example: Differences By Groups of Participants

Outcome Finding: 60% of preschool children showed improvement in reading as measured by ECE Assessment (state performance indicator expectation: 55%)



Chapter 11, p. 110

Examining Progress

Look at how development of print meaning is tracked formally or informally

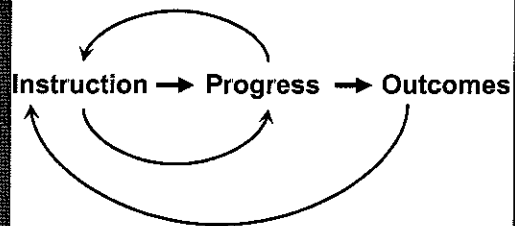
If not tracked → then develop a plan to do so

If tracked → then look at the results

Results may show → Instruction needs to be improved
or

→ More learning opportunities are needed

Using Learning Milestones Data for Program Improvement



Roles for Evaluators

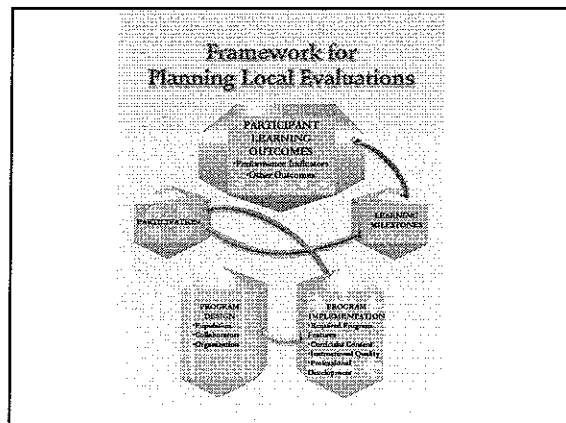
- ✓ Help staff identify milestones and monitoring tools
- ✓ Help set up record-keeping systems
- ✓ Summarize progress on milestones
- ✓ Troubleshoot lack of progress
- ✓ Analyze relationship between progress and results on indicators

Chapter 7, p. 66

Activity #7 Learning Progress Milestones

What do you have that can qualify as a good progress measure?
Is it regular and systematic?
Is it related to the learning outcomes?
Is it aligned with instruction?
Can results be used to guide instruction?

Outcome Area	What Outcome Measure is used?	What is the best Progress Measure you have?
Adult Education		
Pre-school Language & Literacy Development		
School Readiness		
School-age Reading Skills		



Chapter 11: Reporting and Using Evaluation Findings

- Tips for maximizing use of findings
- Levels of reporting
- Organization and content of reports
- Enhancing presentations of findings

Levels of Evaluation Reporting

- Technical report
- Interim reports/progress memos
- Executive summary

Chapter 11, p. 100-102

Sample Table of Contents

I. Program Description	1
(Goals, Design, Services, Partnerships and Collaborators, Participants, Staff)	
II. Study Design.....	3
(Indicators/Outcomes, Objectives, Key Questions, Evaluation Design)	
III. Evaluation Findings.....	7
(Participant Outcomes; State Performance Indicators; Other Participant Outcomes; Program Participation; Attendance and Retention; Key Questions Interpretation/Discussion of Findings)	
IV. Conclusions and Recommendations.....	25
(Summary of findings, Progress based on Previous Year's Recommendations, Conclusions Recommendations for Improvements)	

Chapter 11, p. 103

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Summarize key findings
- Answer key evaluation questions
- Draw conclusions about program effectiveness
- Include recommendations for improvement

Chapter 11, p. 105

Recommendations for Improvement

- Ingredients of a recommendation
 - Problem well defined and supported by data
 - Recommendation is action-oriented
 - Offers variety of potential solution strategies
- Reports progress on past recommendations

Chapter 11, p. 106

Activity #8

Recommendations Review? What's Right? What's Missing?

Defined Problem with Supporting Data Action Oriented Multiple Solutions

- 1 The program does not provide sufficient services to its youngest children, ages three and under. If the program hopes to have a positive impact on outcomes for school-age children, then we suggest the program increases the services it offers to young children. These early childhood educational activities should be offered at the same sites and while parents are engaged in their own literacy activities.
- 2 Although adult basic education students demonstrated significant progress in the development of their math skills, the TABE reading post test scores do not provide evidence of student growth in reading. It is recommended that the program consider increasing the intensity of the adult basic education program offerings. Currently the class offers 225 hours of instruction over a 12-month period and students attend an average of 110 hours.
- 3 The project expectation is that participants will attend a minimum of 65% of their possible classes in the four core components. Attendance data analysis indicates that 50% of the families did not participate in at least 65% of the home and center-based interactive literacy activities. Therefore the expectation was not met. In an effort to increase participation it is recommended that staff review participation expectations with families, analyze attendance data on a monthly basis to identify families who are not meeting the expectation and consider using incentives to reward attendance that meets expectations.

Activity #8

Recommendations Review? What's Right? What's Missing?

Defined Problem with Supporting Data Action Oriented Multiple Solutions

- 4 Math appears to remain one of the most challenging subjects for Even Start parents. Staff members have discovered that people learn math differently. It is recommended that the program purchase the Expert math curriculum for adult educators and train all staff.
- 5 This is an excellent project. Staff members are to be commended for their efforts. It is recommended that staff review the evaluation findings and disseminate the Executive Summary.
- 6 The program did not meet the performance indicator for school attendance. However, the evaluation this year found that kindergarten children were less likely to attend school regularly than students in grades 1, 2 & 3. The evaluation found no relationship between special needs school-age children and attendance rates. It is recommended that the program develop parent education sessions or another systematic approach to help parents learn the value of their children attending kindergarten and all grades regularly.

Chapter 8 & 9

Selecting and Working with an Evaluator

Background

Definition of Independent Evaluator

- Consultant to program, not an employee
- Provides objective, independent perspective
- Outside of or external to project

Example: Independence

- Dr. C is a professor at the university. She is known for her research in parenting education and has experience in program evaluation. The Even Start program has hired her to provide training, monitor implementation of the parenting curriculum that she developed, and evaluate the Even Start program.
- Selection Issues: Dr. C possesses evaluation expertise but her ability to function as an independent evaluator is compromised because she also provides services as a content expert.

Desired Qualifications

- Evaluation and measurement expertise
- Knowledgeable about family literacy
- Works in partnership with staff
- Possesses good communication skills
- Is sensitive and respectful
- Demonstrates professional integrity

Example: Expertise

- A retired school principal, Mr. A was instrumental in getting the Even Start program funded and is excited about the possibility of continuing his involvement by serving as the project evaluator. He is knowledgeable about family literacy and figures he can learn about evaluation "on-the-job."
- Selection Issues: Without a background and some experience with program evaluation, Mr. A. can only provide limited guidance on evaluation issues. It is unlikely that he will be able to perform the full range of evaluation tasks expected of an independent evaluator.

Working with an Evaluator

- Basic Elements of an Evaluation Agreement
- Developing a Scope of Work

Evaluation Agreement

- Specifies all tasks and functions
- Lists services, products and activities
- Estimates days to complete tasks
- Cost based on evaluator's daily rate
- Costs cover on-site and off-site work
- Negotiated costs (travel and trainings)

Sample Scope of Work for a Comprehensive Evaluation of an Even Start Program (include approximate number/range of days for completing each task)

Tasks/Activities/Products	Days @\$500/day
•Develop an evaluation design and management plan	3-4 days
•Train staff in administering, scoring, and interpreting selected instruments	1-2 days
•Develop forms, interview protocols, and questionnaires	2-3 days
•Conduct interviews/administer surveys	1-3 days
•Develop spreadsheets and train staff in data input	1-2 days
•Aggregate/analyze outcome data and findings from evaluation questions	2-4 days
•Assist in fulfilling state requirements for program quality review	1-3 days
•Monitor project development/implementation	3-5 days
•Write evaluation reports and recommendations for improvement	4-6 days
•Communicate findings to a variety of audiences	1-2 days
•Attend state conferences and federal meetings-required to achieve job responsibilities and activities	1-2 days

Factors to Consider in Evaluation Costs

- Evaluator's role (advisory or performing)
- Extent of Scope of work
- Consider number of sites/participants
- Attendance at activities/meetings/trainings
- Data collection methods
- Number questions included in focused study

Tips for Facilitating Evaluator-Staff Relationships

- Orient evaluator and staff
- Schedule opportunities to communicate
- Establish reasonable expectations
- Monitor the evaluator's performance

Example: Working Style

- Ms. E. has years of experience working as an independent evaluator. She provides the project with an evaluation design and a binder of materials listing all instruments and a data collection plan. She tells the staff that her role will be to monitor their data collection efforts over the course of the year and write the report.
- Selection Issues: Ms. E's directive style does not facilitate staff and stakeholder involvement in the process of designing the evaluation questions, identifying instruments and data collection approaches and interpreting findings.